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H. C. J.

THE

BANK OF CHARITY,

AT

PROVIDENCE CHAPEL.

INSTITUTED, FEBRUARY 22, 1790.

BY WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S.S.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL; AND MONK-
WELL STREET, IN THE CITY.

UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, LET EVERY ONE OF YOU
LAY BY HIM IN STORE, AS GOD HATH PROSPERED HIM, THAT
THERE BE NO GATHERINGS WHEN I COME. 1 COR. XVI. 2.

LO D O N;

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P R E F A C E.

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS IN CHRIST JESUS,

AS I have published to the world a *Bank of Faith*, I have now formed a plan to raise, and keep supplied, a *Bank of Charity*, in our Church; that the *Lord's poor*, sick, and aged, among us, may have some resource to fly to in times of necessity.

FIRST—with wishing grace, mercy, and peace—I think it my duty to inform you, that I am at times grievously burdened, (especially in the *winter season*) week after week, and day after day, with the repeated complaints of the sick, the afflicted, and the distressed: My first application, upon such emergencies, is to my own pocket; and, when that fails, (as is often the case) my next resource is, either to borrow in my own name, beg of the gentlemen in the *Vestry*, or else collect from the *pulpit*. The first lays me under many obligations; the second is burdening a few, while others are eased, 2 Cor. viii. 13. and the last opens the mouths of many, about too much collecting.

These outgoings have frequently laid me so bare, that I have been fearful of marring mine own inheritance,

tance, instead of clearing off the Chapel-debt: and, at other times, I have been almost ready to join with Moses in his peevish petition, saying, “ Have I “ conceived all this people? have I begotten them? “ Whence should I have flesh to give to all this “ people? For they weep unto me, saying, “ Give “ us flesh.” I am not able to bear all this people “ alone; because it is too heavy for me. And, if “ thou deal thus with me, kill me out of hand, and “ let me not see my wretchedness. I want others “ to bear the burden with me, and not bear it all “ myself.” *Numb. chap. xi.* For one calls on me for *bread*; another, to *pay his rent*; a *third*, to *discharge his doctor's bill*; a *fourth*, to *redeem his garment laid to pledge*; while a *fifth* sends me an anonymous letter, describing a desperate case; and concluding with crying—“ Shame of such sufferings in “ a Christian country!” as they term it. As if the “ daily ministrations of all the Grecian widows were “ fallen to my lot.” *Acts, vi. 1.* Not less than two or three guineas in a week have at times gone out of my pocket towards the relief of these, when it was my duty to have paid the *chapel* and my own *lawful debts first*; as God does not approve of *robbery for burnt-offerings*, *Isa. lxi. 8.* But it is impossible that it should be done, if, like *Martha*, I am left to *serve tables alone*, and the Lord does not bid *my sister Mary help me*, *Luke, x. 40.*—for my family increases, both at home and abroad; insomuch, that I have

I have stood amazed at the innumerable petitions which have been made or sent to me; especially, as it is so well known what a share of poverty, hunger, cold, and nakedness, has fallen to my share by the way: besides the Chapel-debt to clear by it's own income, without *begging* or *collecting* any part thereof from other Churches—and having had *thirteen children* born to me, *eight* of which are now living. Indeed, I have been ready to conclude, at times, that my *petitioners* have been *past feeling*, otherwise they never could have burdened a poor individual with such numberless complaints, who was *himself sent out without either purse or scrip*.

I have often intreated the Almighty either to furnish my pocket for the relief of these, or send them to another *door*: but in this matter I could never prevail; for I was sure to have *four* or *five* in one day, if I happened to be without a shilling in the house, which has frequently been the case. By these means, my *studies* have been much *interrupted*; my *thoughts scattered*; and my mind so *embittered*, that my supplicants could hardly get a *sight* of me; and, if a *sight*, not a civil answer from me—for, where there is nothing to be had, the king must lose his right. At times, I have been ready to conclude that God never sent them to me, as *he* knew that, at such times, there was no provision for them in my hands. However, I believe that Providence per-

mitted them to pursue and drive me into such a corner, that I might alarm the whole Household, while God would *touch the hearts of others of the family* to ease me of this burden: for, as age and weakness are creeping on me, the *ministry*, and the *cares of my own family*, are work enough for me. The *church*, and *my own house*, are my province, but not the *care of all the poor*. I find it work enough to get the *bread of life* to feed the Lord's Household: to this work He sent me, but not to the other; therefore “it is not reason that I should leave the word of “God, and serve tables.” *Acts*, vi. 2.

There is something of this sort set on foot in other communities, for the relief of the *sick poor*, called *The Sick Man's Friend*. But we would not wish this to stand upon so broad a bottom; for the bounty of that is extended to all—to unbelievers as well as to *the household of faith*. Certain it is that the people of the *world*, who *have their portion in this life*, are far richer in temporal things than the *Church of God*. Our liberality must be confined to the poor of the Lord's family. *Zion's bounty belongs to the household of faith*.

The world have got *their poor always with them*, and when they will they may do them good. And the charity of the world is limited to it's own poor: *Sinners love sinners*.—*The World loves it's own*, but hates those who are *chosen out of it*, and who are not *of it*. If ever *the earth helps the woman*, (Rev. xii. 16.)

it is not done intentionally. We are to do good unto all men, *but especially to the household of faith.* Thus it appears that the World hath got it's poor, and the *Lord bath got his poor also.*

The poor in spirit are the Lord's poor; and the needy among them are the objects of Zion's benevolence, and are entitled to her alms: *Forget not the congregation of THY POOR for ever,* Psalm lxxiv. 19. “ He shall judge the people in righteousness, and “ *THY POOR with judgment,*” Psalm lxxii. 2. *Whoever shall give to drink, unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward,* Matt. x. 42.

For although we are *commanded* to do good unto all men; to love our enemies; give, lend, and hope for nothing of it again—yet the promised blessing is to those who love CHRIST, and believe HIM in his members: “ *I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; thirsty, and ye gave Me drink, &c.*” Matt. xxv. 34. But, as to those who do not believe CHRIST, their charity stands for nothing in his account: *Then shall be answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto the LEAST OF THESE, ye did it not unto Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment,* Matt. xxv. 45, 46. In obedience to this, *the DISCIPLES, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto*

the BRETHREN which dwelt in Judea; which also they did, Acts, xi. 29.

If believers have [unconverted] widows, they are to confine their charity to them at home—being bound to them by the ties of blood or affinity—but the CHURCH is not to be charged with them, (1 Tim. v. 16.) for SHE is under no obligation to such, though a single member may: and, if the Church is not to be charged with a member's relations, she is not to be charged with the poor and sick of this world. When the Gentiles come to the light, and kings to the brightness of Zion's rising, they shall bring GOLD and INCENSE with them (Isa. lx. 3. 6.) into the church. They are to SUBMIT themselves with PIECES OF SILVER, (Psalm lxviii. 30.) as the young disciples really did when they laid their WEALTH at the apostles feet. But draining the church of God to relieve the world cannot be called CONSECRATING their GAIN unto the LORD, and their SUBSTANCE unto the LORD of the whole earth, Mic. iv. 13. for the Saviour declares, if it be not done unto one of his LITTLE ONES, it is not DONE unto HIM.

Having laid this matter before the Deacons, we have agreed upon the following Plan.

THE

BANK OF CHARITY.

ARTICLE I.

ANY persons, whether in church-communion or not, who favour the Lord's cause and people, are at liberty to give or send their *free-will offerings* to this Bank, with or without their names, just as they please, how they please, and when they please.

ARTICLE II.

Any person who may reap any spiritual benefit from the ministry, and who may be inclined to leave or bequeath any thing to this Bank, it will be secured, if left to the *appointed Bankers* (hereafter named) of the *Bank of Charity*, at Providence Chapel, for the relief of the poor.

ARTICLE III.

Those who chuse to subscribe, shall be at liberty to subscribe what they please; but none shall subscribe less than Six-pence

—pence per Month—for those who cannot afford that, had better give nothing: for which purpose a Book shall be opened, and proper accounts kept.

ARTICLE IV.

The times of payment shall be on the first Thursday after the appointed day of *breaking bread*, from Four o'clock in the Afternoon till Eight in the Evening, at the Vestry; at which times the *Bankers* shall attend: and on *Monday Evening*, and on *Wednesday Evening*, from *Five till Half past Six o'clock*; so that there be no gatherings when I come to preach, *1 Cor. xvi. 2.*

ARTICLE V.

John Stephenson, of Duke Street, and Thomas Best, of Covent Garden, are nominated *Bankers* of this *Bank*; who shall receive and keep the cash, keep an account of what is received in and paid out, and be accountable for the same: and, if it be needful to call in more to assist, or to succeed the above-mentioned persons, in case of sickness or hurry of business, others of *honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom*, shall be appointed over this business—as we would not like to burden our minister with the distribution of the money, any farther than to give his judgment: *But let him give himself continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word, Acts vi. 3, 4.*

ARTICLE VI.

The books shall be open for the inspection of any Member, Subscriber, or Donator; and at the General Meeting, which shall be at Christmas, an account shall be given of the

the sums paid in, of the sums paid out, and of the stock then in the *Bank*.

ARTICLE VII.

No persons shall be entitled to relief from this *Bank* but the Members of the Church who are in church-fellowship with us: for those that fear God, and are given to hospitality, are to distribute to the NECESSITY of the SAINTS, *Rom.* xii. 13. The contribution gathered by Paul was for the POOR SAINTS; and God tells them, it is their duty to MINISTER to THEM, *Rom.* xv. 26, 27. and not to take the children's bread, and cast it unto dogs.

ARTICLE VIII.

If a male or female Member of the Church have a sick wife, or a sick husband, who are unbelievers, the Member shall be entitled to relief—the man and his wife being one: The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the faith of her husband; and those that are clean may eat thereof, *Lev.* vii. 18.

ARTICLE IX.

Every person that applies for relief shall have two Members to recommend them, that they are persons of industry, sobriety, and of honest report, that the Church be not imposed upon by persons who are disorderly, and who work not at all; for SUCH are commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own BREAD, *2 Theff.* iii. 11, 12.

ARTICLE X.

This *Bank* is not intended to pay enormous debts—which it is not expected to be able to do—but for the present relief

lief of the Poor, the Sick, and the Aged. No certain sum, therefore, can be fixed; it must be left to the judgment of the Deacons, and those who recommend the case.

ARTICLE XI.

We think ourselves justifiable in confining the Bank to the Members of the Church only; as there are legions who go from place to place to hear the Gospel, who have no knowledge of it, nor love to it, but only to get a livelihood in idleness. Numbers of these have waited upon us at Christmas, both at Providence Chapel and in the City; who informed us how long they had sat under our ministry, when not one of us ever saw their faces before. These, like drone-bees in the hive, devour what the industrious lay in store for the winter. To relieve such is encouraging idleness, robbing the poor of God's people, suffering ourselves to be imposed upon by Satan, and countenancing the worst of hypocrites: for, as they are no gods which are made with hands, so they are no converts which are made with money.

ARTICLE XII.

Should any persons, who are disaffected either to the minister or the people, take umbrage at this, they may signify the same before the new *tokens of admission* come out, and withdraw themselves; as we would not wish to tie or confine any persons to us longer than while they are profited by the ministry. Our end in view is to assist the poor and needy, that our minister may go on with his warfare without being *entangled with the affairs of this life*, and that he may please HIM who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

ARTICLE XIII.

We are aware that this *Bank of Charity* will make many converts, and bring numbers of poor into the Church. To prevent the abuse of this our liberality, we have agreed, that every person who shall offer himself, or herself, as a Member of the Church, after we have heard a reason of their hope, and a confession of their faith, before ever a token or ticket of admission be given to such persons, the names of such persons, and their places of abode, shall be published from the Clerk's desk on the Lord's Day; and on the same day their names shall be put up in writing on the inside of each of the Chapel-doors; that if any Member can shew any cause, or knows any misconduct in such persons, why they should not be received into Church-fellowship, they may certify the same; which is more agreeable to us, than to bring every timorous person who may offer himself as a Member to give in his experience before a Church of near six hundred in number. A believer may be able to tell all that fear God, if they come unto him, what God has done for his soul, who would be quite confounded when brought before a multitude.

ARTICLE XIV.

That new tokens, or tickets of admission, be printed immediately, of a different colour from the old ones; and each Member be furnished with one before the Subscription be opened, that some few, whose conduct and conversation are reprehensible, may be purged from us.

ARTICLE XV.

It is also agreed, that any person who shall recommend a case, shall apply to the Bankers on Monday or Wednesday evening, in the Vestry, and not go after them to their own houses, to hinder them in their business: as we are commanded to be *diligent in business, as well as fervent in the Lord's service.*

ARTICLE XVI.

The Subscription to open, and commence from, Monday, the 22d of February 1790.

“ All this the Lord made us understand in writing, by his good hand upon us—even all the works of this pattern.” *1 Chron. xxviii. 19.*

4 JY 59

Read, approved, and signed, by

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON,	
JOHN BRAYNE,	JOHN STEPHENSON,
THOMAS BEST,	ROBERT RANDALL,
SAMUEL CARNALL,	JAMES DAVIDSON,
JAMES BAKER,	GARNET TERRY.

